

## A Celebration of Governor Locke's Literacy Programs

On December 8<sup>th</sup> Governor Locke was recognized for his outstanding contributions to Literacy programs in Washington at the new Seattle Library. Locke's programs which include the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge and the Washington Reading Corps have helped tens of thousands of struggling readers to improve their reading skills and have encouraged thousands of students to spend part of their summer vacations reading.



Photo: Governor Locke poses with 11-year-old Brian W. Hughes, a Summer Reading Challenge participant who won the grand prize of a trip to Disneyland for him and his family.

Speakers included WCNCS Executive Director Bill Basl, WA State Librarian Jan Walsh, and OSPI's WA Reading Corps Coordinator Sarah Rich.

At the event Governor Locke thanked librarians, teachers, volunteers and national service members for their outstanding work with the reading programs.



Photo: Staff and AmeriCorps members at the Fremont Public Association (FPA) pose with Governor Locke. The FPA hosts Washington Reading Corps members who serve in elementary schools throughout King County.

### More About the Summer Reading Challenge

The goal of the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge was to encourage all children and youth, ages 18 and under, to spend time over their summer vacation reading. The readers were asked to spend at least 15 hours either reading or being read to over the summer. In 2004, 16,026 children participated in the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge, a 283% increase from 2003. The program's success was due in large part to the strong partnerships developed among the Office of the Governor, the Washington State Library, and public libraries across Washington.

Alaska Airlines sponsored a grand prize of a trip to Disneyland for one participant whose name was drawn from the list of everyone who completed the program. Eleven-year-old Brian W. Hughes won the grand prize trip. In addition to the grand prize, sixteen book prizes, sponsored by the Verizon Foundation grant, were awarded to both boy and girl participants in eight age categories. Each child who participated and completed the required fifteen hours of reading also received a certificate of recognition signed by Governor Locke.

### More About the Washington Reading Corps

The mission of the Washington Reading Corps (WRC) is to improve reading abilities of K-6 students across Washington State. This is achieved through research-based tutoring of struggling readers and

effective collaborations among schools, families, community members, National Service, business and state partners. So far this year more than 9,000 students participated in the Washington Reading Corps program. Nearly 5,000 adult, peer, and cross-age community volunteers tutored the students. Approximately 275 VISTA and AmeriCorps members provided direct tutoring and recruited and trained the community volunteers.

The Washington Reading Corps state partners include representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Commission for National and Community Service, and Washington Service Corps. In addition, the WRC has created the new Ready Readers program with Page Ahead, the Seattle based children's literacy non-profit. This initiative will provide community-based programs with the purpose of increasing local literacy resources and providing educational support to low-income and migrant families. Eleven AmeriCorps and VISTA members are developing programs following the Page Ahead community outreach model, which has been used successfully in King County. The program components include parent workshops, story time, guest readers, and community partnership programs. The pilot sites serve communities in Thurston, Snohomish, Spokane, Yakima, and King Counties.